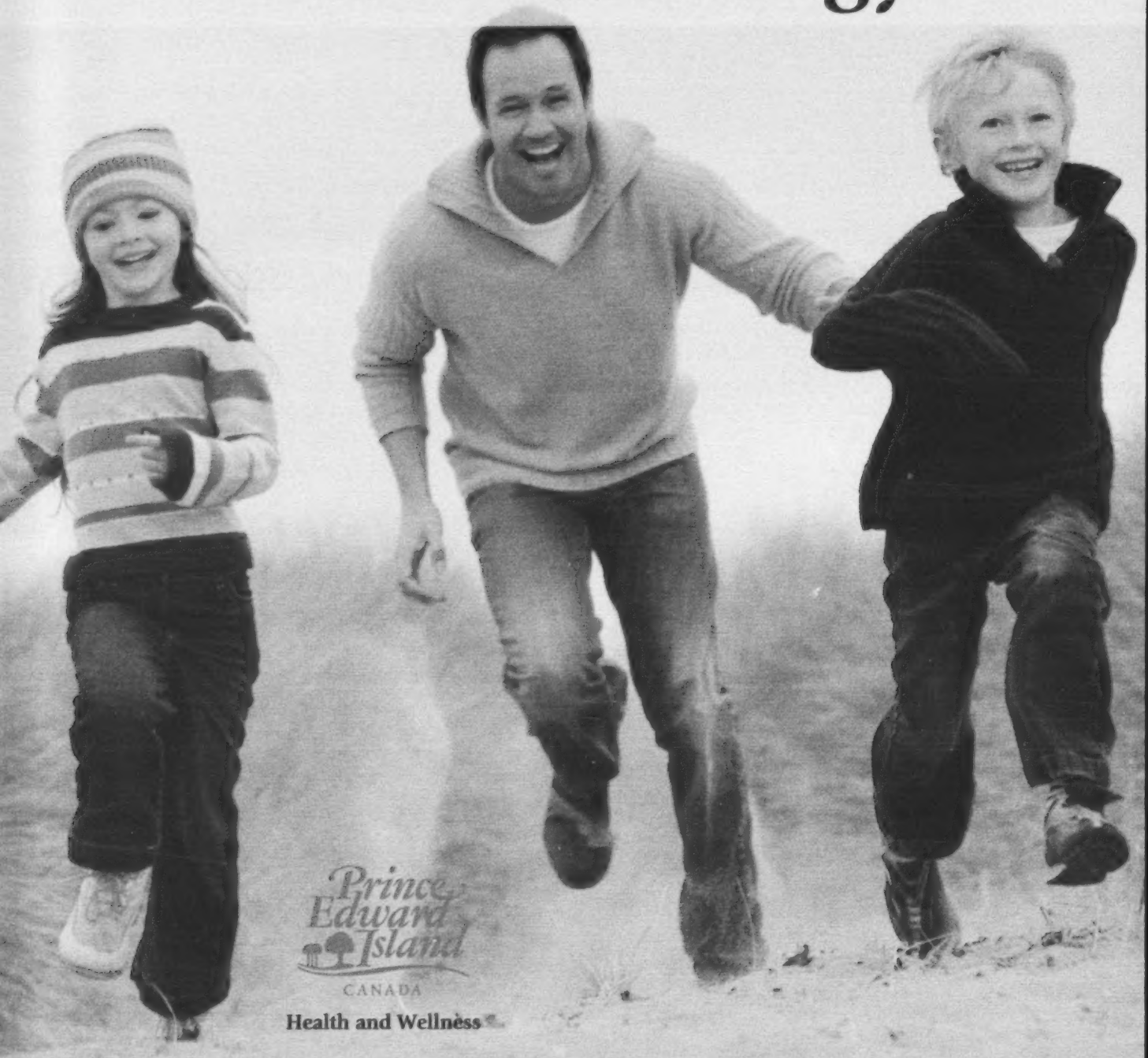
Wellness Strategy



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Preamble

PEI has such a strong sense of community, and the quality of life of Islanders is an ongoing and important discussion. Each of us wants the best for our families, our neighbors and fellow Islanders. Health and wellbeing has a direct connection to quality of life and Islanders are fortunate to have many government and non-government organizations providing healthy living services, programs and supports.

Despite the best efforts of these organizations, Islanders are seeing a continued rise in a number of chronic disease rates[1,2], they are seeing greater pressures placed on the health care system[3] and they are dealing with many factors that are negatively impacting their quality of life. This Wellness Strategy is designed to address the above challenges by creating a plan to mobilize all Islanders, communities, organizations and government departments to do their part in creating a province that supports and celebrates healthy living.

To arrive at the point of launching this strategy, the PEI Department of Health and Wellness has consulted with a number of organizations and individuals with a mandate and/or interest in healthy living. These consultations included:

- An online and paper survey allowing Islanders to review a discussion paper on wellness and provide feedback on suggested actions
- Multiple meetings with groups and organizations who work within this realm
- A review of a number of wellness strategies from across Canada and around the world

Thanks to the hundreds of Islanders who have provided input into shaping this Wellness Strategy. The ongoing engagement of these individuals, organizations and many others will be required for this strategy to be successful in achieving the vision of Islanders living longer, healthier, productive and fulfilling lives.

> **"Government must work with all partners and groups on creating healthier environments and improved well being for all Islanders ....."**
>
> **Discussion Paper Respondent**

Introduction

Islanders have a long history of working together to improve our communities and Province. In times of need, Islanders have always rallied together to support individuals, groups or causes and it is this type of rally required to achieve the objective of a healthier province. Wellness should be everyone's business and for the advancement of this strategy, efforts will be required from government, communities, schools, workplaces, families and individuals.

With each stakeholder, there needs to be leadership at many different levels grounded in a common purpose to make the healthy choice the easy choice. As was referenced numerous times in the public consultation process, the easy choice doesn't always look the same to all Islanders and therefore developing innovative and diverse approaches is necessary to meet the wellness needs of Islanders.

The actions within the strategy are categorized into five main pillars including:

- Mental Wellness
- Being Physically Active and Reducing Sedentary Time
- Living Tobacco-Free
- Healthy Eating
- Consuming Alcohol Responsibly

Though the pillars are listed individually, the need to address the actions collaboratively across all five pillars is critically important. Many of the risk factors are interrelated and there is a strong link between mental and physical health.[4]

Now is the time for all Islanders to come together to build a healthier future for themselves, their families and their Province. Creating this change will require long term and sustained cooperation with each stakeholder doing their part for the greater good of our Province. Achieving the vision of this strategy can only be realized by all of us "Working Together" to live longer, healthier, productive and fulfilling lives.

> "The most important factor is that all of these initiatives be coordinated and the actions not done in silos."
>
> **Discussion Paper Respondent**

Why A Provincial Wellness Strategy

The impacts are individual and societal

An ancient proverb reads "you never miss the well until the water runs dry." This proverb speaks to health at the individual and provincial level. Humans often carry on with day to day living with little thought of any preventative health activities, for a variety of reasons, until a health challenge occurs. When it does occur, it has a very personal impact on the individual and the ripples are felt across society including the person's family, co-workers and community members.

At an individual level, living with a chronic disease or illness can and does pose great challenges to a person's physical and mental health. The challenges become even more compounded if the environment where they live isn't conducive to making healthy choices, if the supports they require do not exist or if they haven't developed the necessary skills to manage the condition.[5]

As chronic disease rates and illness rise, which is the case in PEI[1,2], the challenges faced by Islanders become even more acute because there are many more people attempting to access the same services & supports. This is where we begin to see the impacts on a provincial level and the trends are very alarming. Consider the following statistics:

- 1 in 3 Islanders (31%) have a chronic condition[1,2]
- 1 in 5 Islanders (20 years and older) have hypertension[1,2]
- 1 in 11 Islanders (20 years and older) have been diagnosed with diabetes[1,2]
- 1 in 7 Islanders (35 years and older) have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)[1]
- In any given year, 1 in 5 Canadians experiences a mental health or addiction problem[6]
- 7 out of 10 mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence[6]
- 1 in 4 Islanders (27%) who consumed alcohol in the last twelve months reported heavy drinking[1]
- 1 in 2 Islanders (48%) are considered inactive[1,2]
- 6 in 10 Islanders (18 years of age and older) have self reported they are overweight or obese[1,2]
- 1 in 6 Islanders (20% males and 17% females) over the age of 12 are smokers[1,2]
- More than 2 in 3 Islanders (68%) 12 years and older do not consume the recommended five vegetables and fruits per day.[1,2]
- 1 in 4 Island students from grades 5 to 12 report watching more than 2 hours of television per day (and this doesn't include computer or video game time)[7]

Our landscape is changing

The wellness challenges Islanders are facing is further complicated by a number of societal trends which make living well even more difficult. Technological advances continue to provide entertaining opportunities to engage with electronic devices however this appears to be at the expense of enjoying nature, being physically active and spending social time with family and friends. Active Healthy Kids Canada reports that Canadian children spend an average of 7 hours and 48 minutes of screen time per day with less than 20% meeting the sedentary behavior guidelines of no more than 2 hours per day.[8]

The availability of convenience foods to support the need for quick meals continues to grow, though these foods often have very high levels of sodium, sugar and calories.[9] Foods and beverages that once were deemed "treats" are now consumed as everyday foods and food costs continue to grow whereby the purchase of healthier foods becomes more challenging for the majority of Islanders.[10]

The work environment is changing and employees are spending longer periods of time at work in more sedentary positions. Employees are indicating the balance between work and home life is becoming increasingly tougher to manage and as a result stress levels and mental health issues continue to rise.[11]

The provincial demographics are also changing. By 2020, it is estimated that 1 in 5 Islanders will be over the age of 65 and this rate is expected to grow as each year passes.[1] In 2013, PEI saw the highest level of inter-provincial outmigration in the last 30 years which also impacts our demographic trends and the effect it has on our communities and families.[12]

The costs are real

The social, economic and emotional costs of chronic disease and illness are rising and will change the way of life for Islanders. The province is nearing a point where 1 out of every 2 dollars from the provincial budget will be spent on health care[13, 14] and it is well documented that chronic disease rates rise with an ageing population and as a result treatment costs will rise.[3]

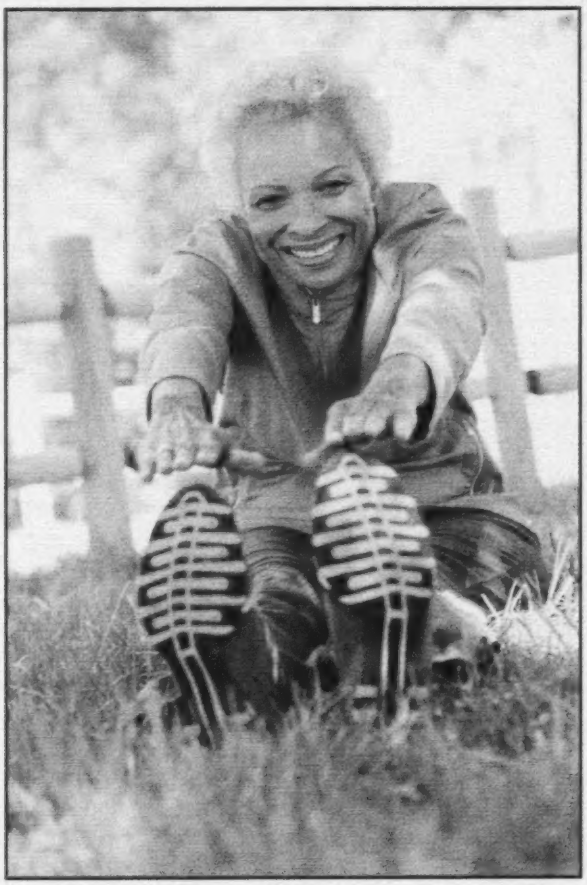
Small rural towns and communities are seeing their population decrease on an annual basis with more and more Islanders moving to urban settings to be closer to the service centers or leaving the province in search of employment.[15] These changes are leading to reduced social opportunities and a decline in the types of opportunities traditionally available at the community level.

Caring for and supporting a loved one dealing with a chronic disease or illness is complicated and takes a toll on the caregiver over time. As the health system continues to face new pressures to care for the increasing numbers of Islanders dealing with chronic diseases and illness, more support will be required from families, friends and the community at large.

The time to act is now

While the statistics seem daunting, and the issues complex, Islanders cannot lose sight of the many groups, organizations and individuals working to reverse these trends. This strategy must build on this great work, strengthen the partnerships among interested groups, bring new groups to the table and provide specific actions that lead to a higher quality of life for more Islanders in the future.

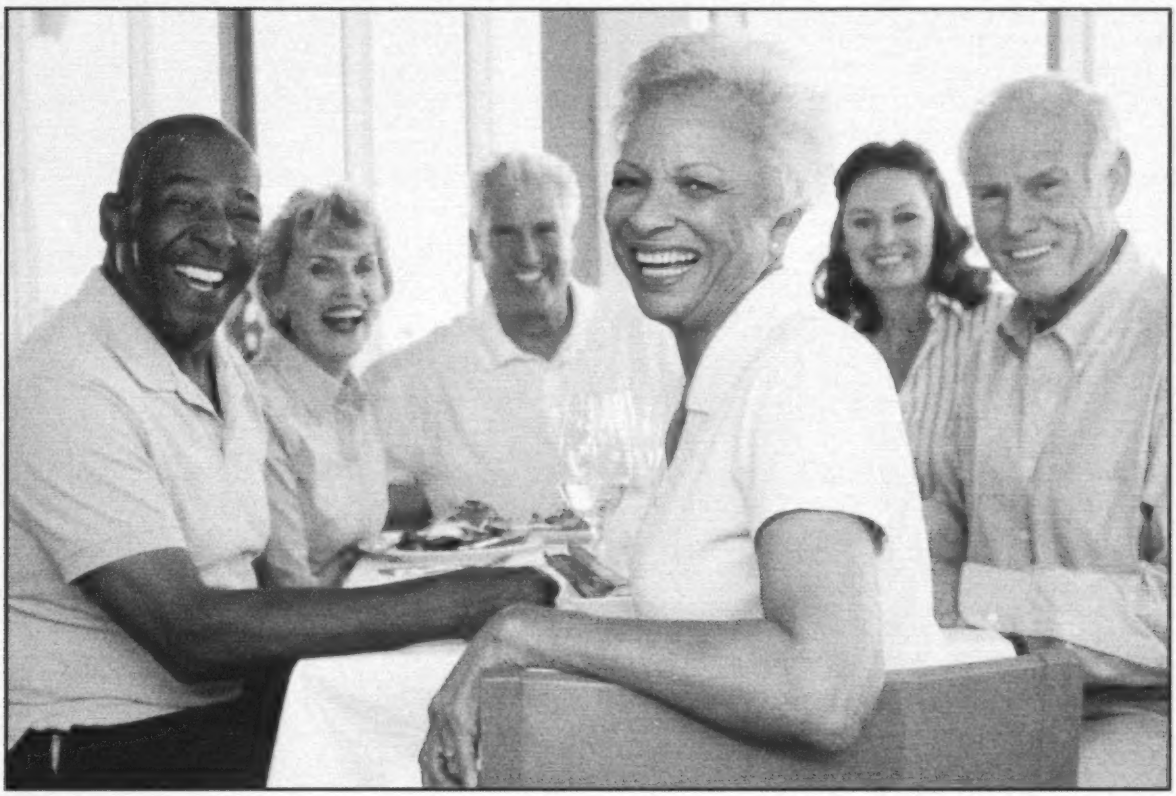
The supports Islanders require looks significantly different for each and every one and therefore the actions need to be holistic and cover all stages of life (infants, children and youth, adults and older adults) in a variety of settings (community, workplaces and schools) to impact change.



Vision Statement

Prince Edward Islanders live longer, healthier, productive and fulfilling lives through:

- Supportive communities and environment which make the healthy choice the easy choice
- Ensuring the supports for living well exist for those who require them
- Personal choices leading to positive physical and mental health



Guiding Principles

With a strong focus on multi-stakeholder engagement, there needs to be a common purpose to allow all partners and Islanders to see their place within this strategy at a local, regional and provincial level.

1. Determinants of Health – There are many factors, some of which are out of Islanders control, that impact health. This strategy recognizes the important role the determinants of health play in trying to change behaviors and must align itself with many government and non-government strategies and actions to influence the determinants;

2. Multi-stakeholder Collaboration – It is going to take all Islanders to change the culture of healthy living in our province. This includes governments, community, schools, industry, organizations and individuals to look at how they can get involved in the wellness conversations and actions;

3. Education with Action – Any educational or informational campaign must be accompanied with the necessary supports for those wishing to make a positive change in their lives. These supports must be accessible and timely;

4. Evidenced Based with Local Solutions – All our activities and actions will use the best evidence possible while encouraging local, made in PEI solutions;

5. Inclusion and Engagement – Islanders need to see themselves as part of the solution to the wellness challenges we are facing as a province;

6. Sustainable – Any activities and actions within the strategy must be consistent with the resources available; and

7. Accountable – Regular monitoring and reporting on the actions needs to be a basic tenet of this strategy. This will allow the ongoing refocusing of the actions based on new information and the results of past actions.

The success of this strategy requires all government departments and non-government organizations to use a health lens when building policy, programs and services for Islanders and communities. This in combination with the above guiding principles will lead us to work together for a healthier and more productive province.

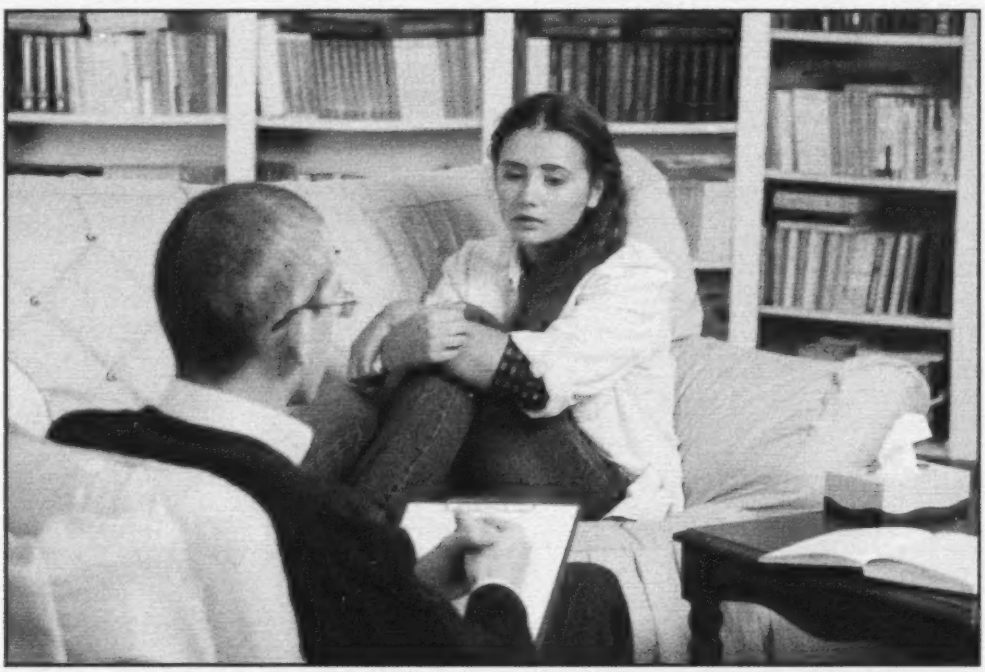
Five Pillars

Mental Health

The definition of health by the World Health Organization is: "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease" and mental health is defined as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community."[4] Islanders who have positive mental wellness are better equipped to deal with the stresses and challenges that life presents. They enjoy greater satisfaction in life, strong connections with family, friends and community and enjoy more positive emotions. The relationship between positive mental health and physical health are both reciprocal and dependent. There is not one without the other.

The environments where we live, work and play and the relationships within these are critical influences on our mental health. By increasing mental health promotion and anti-stigma efforts on the Island, the knowledge, skills and training of Islanders in the area of mental health will be enhanced. This is also realized through timely positive and healthy experiences for children and youth. This strategy will aim to foster an environment for all Islanders to flourish and enjoy the many benefits of positive mental health.

> Keep talking of Mental Health every day.
>
> **Discussion Paper Respondent**



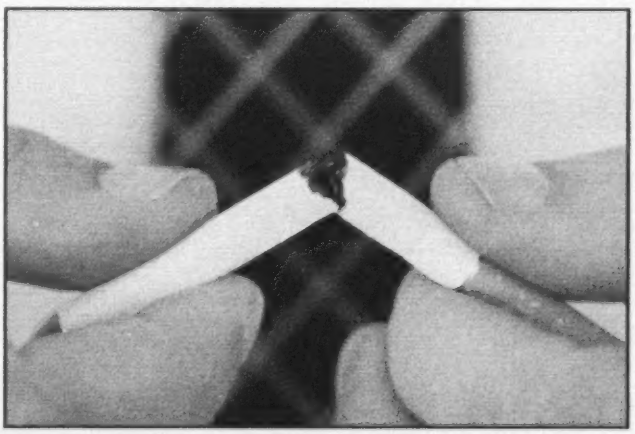
Physical Activity and Reduction in Sedentary Behavior

Islanders who are physically active and limit the amount of time they spend in sedentary positions are at a lower risk of acquiring a number of chronic diseases and illnesses.[1] Getting Island children & youth moving is important for proper growth and development and it is critical for maintaining health as we age. Living independently later in life requires Islanders to be able to carry out basic functions requiring strong bones and muscles which is another benefit of an active lifestyle.

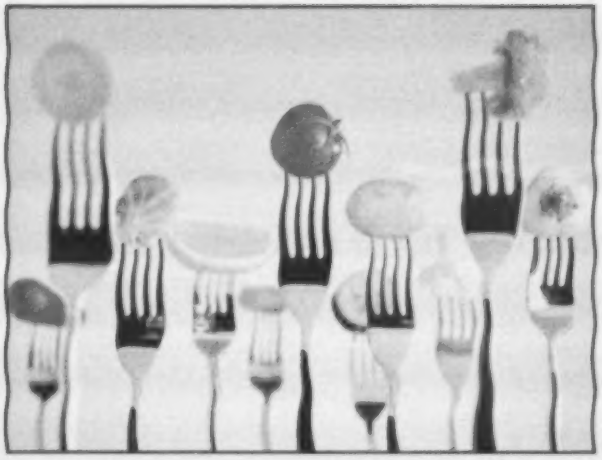
Conversely, Islanders need to focus on the amount of time they are spending in front of screens and find balance between enjoying the natural world and the electronic world. Active play for children and youth can be just as engaging as electronic play if the proper conditions are created. Adults must set a positive example for this to occur.

Living Tobacco-Free

Over the past few decades, great strides have been made in reducing the number of Islanders using tobacco and those being exposed to second hand smoke.[16] The research is very clear that those consuming tobacco increase their risk for a number of chronic diseases and health conditions.[1] Quitting smoking and the use of other tobacco products can be very challenging for Islanders and it is important the proper supports are in place when Islanders decide to quit. With the launch of new tobacco based products, flavors and marketing strategies, Islanders must remain vigilant in the campaign to reduce tobacco use and keep new users from starting. Updating legislation and programs to stay ahead of these new tobacco approaches is critical to keeping Islanders well.



Healthy Eating



There are opportunities to impact healthy food and overall healthy living choices in many different settings and across the lifespan – from breastfeeding friendly environments, early learning centers, schools, post-secondary education settings, workplaces, recreation facilities, hospitals, and long term care facilities. Policies demonstrate the commitment to creating healthy environments in these settings.[17]

With today's busy lifestyle there have been a growing number of convenience foods on the market. Some convenience foods are quite healthy, but many are high in sodium, added sugar, and calories. With the reliance on convenience foods people are cooking less whole foods and are losing food preparation skills. Having food skills helps to create a stronger connection to where our food comes from and gives us more options for healthy food choices while on a tight budget.[9]

Across Canada we see the cost of food continues to climb. PEI has many low income households with many people who would be classified as 'food insecure'. This is a complex issue and needs a collaborative effort to address it.[18]

> **"Help people understand how to eat healthy, prepare healthy meals and make good choices at the grocery store."**
>
> **Discussion Paper Respondent**

Consuming Alcohol Responsibly

Alcohol misuse is a significant negative contributor to population health and the social fabric of the province.[1] Over consumption, drinking and driving, underage drinking and binge drinking are a number of behaviors that lead to undesirable outcomes such as individual harm, family and community disharmony, violence and in some cases death.

There needs to be a new normal created for alcohol consumption in the province with Islanders enjoying alcoholic beverages in a responsible fashion.

Goals, Priorities And Actions

The PEI Wellness Strategy will work towards accomplishing the following five goals over the next three years (2014 to 2017) by executing the strategic actions listed below along with new actions that present themselves throughout the life of the strategy. Through the creation of a governance plan and pillar leads, every effort will be made to ensure cross pillar activities happen where it makes sense and leads to a more effective and efficient strategy.

GOAL 1 – To increase the number of Islanders who perceive their mental health as excellent or very good by building the resilience and coping skills they require to deal with everyday challenges through mental health promotion, awareness and anti-stigma initiatives.

Priorities	Actions
1.1 Increase the knowledge of programs available to Islanders to promote and support positive mental health	• Introduce and encourage schools to adopt social and emotional learning to promote academic and social growth. • Increase parenting resources and access to programs and services that will help to facilitate healthy children and transitions • Identify and promote, in partnership with the mental health and addictions strategy, the existing programs within the province to support positive mental health and initiate practices which reduce stigma
1.2 Enhance the understanding of mental health and the role it plays on the physical health of Islanders	• Create and circulate messages which clearly demonstrate the positive link between mental and physical health. Use this action to normalize mental health and in turn reduce stigma for those seeking help.

GOAL 2 – To increase the physical activity levels and reduce sedentary time of Islanders

Priorities	Actions
2.1 Provide a positive introduction to sport, recreation and physical activity for children and youth through offering well designed programs	• Ongoing roll out of the Provincial Active Start program designed to enhance physical literacy to children 3-5 years of age in early learning centers, sport and community settings. • Focus efforts on introductory sport programs, early sport experiences and coaching through the Amateur Support Funding Program. • Development of a provincial walk/run club for school aged children and youth. • Enhance recreational programs in the afterschool time period.
2.2 Identify gaps in service delivery for physical activity programs and work to fill those gaps	• Create a provincial walking campaign which provides programs and plans for those who are just starting on their physical activity journey. • Develop a variety of adult recreational sport offerings in different regions across the province to offer opportunities for participation. • Review the program offerings for older adults and then work to develop a plan to increase the number of service providers providing programs to support active ageing. • Develop resources and initiatives to support workplace wellness efforts as it relates to physical activity and the other pillars.
2.3 Support continued action to create environments that foster physical activity and reduce sedentary time	• Develop multi-stakeholder committee (government, school, community and NGO's) to review community and school policies with the outcome of making it easier for programs to be offered in those settings. • Develop a resource to share with parents highlighting the sedentary guidelines for children and some strategies around setting parameters for screen time. • Review transportation policies for communities, schools and government departments and make recommendations for fostering environments that support more active transportation.

GOAL 3 – To reduce tobacco use and the harms it causes Islanders

Priorities	Actions
3.1 Enhance access to programs and services to support Islanders wanting to quit using tobacco.	• Continued implementation of the Ottawa Model for Cessation by including the primary care centers practicing the approach. • Improve access to cessation medications and nicotine replacement therapies. • Introduce new programs for smokers including quite smoking support groups or learn to run programs for smokers
3.2 Increase education on the harms of using tobacco.	• Creation of a curriculum supporting document that aims to educate high school students about the effects of tobacco products and marketing tactics used by advertising companies to influence them. • Work in partnership with wellness committees at the University/ College level to provide additional education to reduce the number of late teens/early adults from smoking. • Provide additional education to health care providers to ensure they understand the different tools available to assist patients with tobacco cessation
3.3 Update legislation	• Adopt new policies and/or legislation to limit the use of tobacco in public places (indoor/outdoor) to promote healthy living and reduce exposure to second hand smoke. • Identify where new tobacco products, such as e-cigarettes, fit within the legislation.

GOAL 4 – To Increase Healthy Eating Behaviors of Islanders

Priorities	Action
4.1 Enhance existing and develop new Healthy Living Policies.	• Enhance the implementation and compliance of school nutrition policies and healthy living guidelines for early learning centers through increased education, enforcement and partnerships with food vendors. • Improve the opportunity to access healthy food choices at recreation facilities. • Refine and promote existing healthy meeting guidelines developed by the DHW and work to have both government and non-government employers put the guidelines into action. • Develop baby friendly policies that create supportive environments for breastfeeding.
4.2 Increase food literacy.	• Develop and implement an education and awareness campaign that addresses excess consumption of added sugars and sodium in foods. • Increase the number and scope of healthy eating cooking classes offered across PEI in partnership with community groups to increase food preparation, shopping skills and nutrition education.
4.3 Reduce food insecurity rates in the Province	• Establish an inter-departmental and community task force to address food insecurity. • Create a working partnership between those working on the Social Action Plan to Reduce Poverty and PEI Wellness Strategy.

GOAL 5 – To reduce heavy and unhealthy drinking behaviors among Islanders

Priorities	Actions
5.1 Increase education on responsible consumption of alcohol.	• Partner with the PEI Liquor Control Commission on educating Islanders on the Canadian Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines through the development of an in-store and social media campaign. • Increase the exposure of existing "responsible drinking / drinking and driving" messages being delivered in the school setting and the community • Initiate conversations with University / Colleges on dangerous drinking habits on campus • Develop an awareness campaign around the dangers of underage drinking, binge drinking and for women who are or plan to become pregnant

Working Together – A Wellness Strategy for Prince Edward Island

Vision

Prince Edward Islanders live longer, healthier, productive and fulfilling lives through:

- Supportive communities and environment which make the healthy choice the easy choice
- Ensuring the supports for living well exist for those who require them
- Personal choices leading to positive physical and mental health

Guiding Principles

Multi-stakeholder Collaboration ◊ Social Determinants of Health ◊ Education with Action ◊ Evidence Based with Local Solutions ◊ Inclusion and Engagement ◊ Sustainable ◊ Accountable

Goals

Positive Mental Health	Being Physically Active	Living Tobacco Free	Healthy Eating	Consuming Alcohol Responsibly

Priorities

Children/ Youth within school setting Parent education Link between physical and mental health	Increase physical literacy and program access for children/youth Policies to create supportive environments Increase programming in areas where gaps exist	Prevention activities for late teen/early adults Implementation of the Ottawa model for cessation Improve access to programs, medication and nicotine replacement therapies	Enhance existing and development of new Healthy Living Policies Increase education opportunities and skill development Reduce food insecurity	Low risk drinking guidelines Prevention and education activities for dangerous drinking habits

Pan-Strategy Activities

Education/promotion campaign on being well
Strong linkages with other government and NGO strategies
Creation of a coordinating committee who sets benchmarks and reports on them

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Prince Edward Island

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